



By EARL WATT

• Leader & Times

GREAT BEND — A second half rally by Liberal ended when a 15-yard penalty for unnecessary roughness gave Great Bend new life, and the Redskins continued to chase the Panthers the rest of the night in a 43-36 loss.

Liberal trailed 21-8 at half but only needed one minute and 11 seconds to cut the deficit to five. Trenton Hammond capped the six-play, 60-yard drive with a 20-yard touchdown reception from Britton Abbott.

A beleaguered Angry Red defense forced what appeared to be a three-and-out on the following Great Bend drive when a Bryce Beck pass sailed 10 yards beyond his intended receiver on a long pass attempt. As the ball bounced on the turf, Hammond blind-sided the defenseless Panther receiver, and the 15-yard penalty gave the Panthers a first down.

And they made the Redskins pay.

Cliff Abbott took Hammond out for three plays after the unnecessary roughness play, but the

Major mistake swings momentum, game, in loss

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Panthers went 70 yards on 12 plays and chewed up six minutes and scored a touchdown on a 15-yard run by Trent Uzelton to stretch the lead to 29-16.

The two teams traded interceptions on their next possessions, and after Hammond picked a Beck pass and returned it to the six yard line, Rex Heronemus drove into the end zone on the first play to cut the Panther advantage to 29-24.

The Panthers recovered the ensuing onside and went 51 yards on eight plays in five minutes including a fourth-down conversion that ended with a 32-yard touchdown run by Greg Burley.

Liberal continued to chase, and Heronemus took over on the following drive with a run and two catches including a seven-yard touchdown reception that capped a eight-play, 55-yard drive that only took a minute and 46 seconds to cut the lead back to five points for the third time, 35-30.

With 3:58 remaining in the game, the Redskins defense couldn't get a key stop.

Great Bend used a steady dose of power running to the right side with two lead blockers pushing the Redskins defense back for five-yard gains by Burley.

On a second-and-nine, Beck kept the ball around the left side, and several Redskin defenders missed tackles while Beck cradled the ball to prevent a turnover for a 10-yard gain and a first down, and Burley broke loose on the next play for a 38-yard touchdown and a 43-30 Panther lead with 1:19 to play.

Liberal drove 61 yards in 10 plays and scored on a one-yard plunge by Abbott with only 4.8 seconds remaining.

Liberal attempted an onside, but for the fourth straight week did not recover, and Great Bend held on for the 43-36 win.

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The Redskins (3-3) will begin district play Friday when Goddard (1-5) makes the trip tot he Burial Grounds.